

REMARKS

1. Claims 1-12 are pending in the application and stand rejected. In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, Applicant requests reexamination of the application and reconsideration of the rejection of the unallowed claims.

2. Rejection under §102b. Claims 1-4, 6 and 8-13 stand rejected over Dodge (U.S. Patent 1,209,134). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Independent claim 1 has been amended to further define the mounting module as comprising at least a yoke. The yoke has a pair of openings formed generally perpendicular to the axis of the axle tube, and the yoke is formed as a unitary extension of the axle tube. This combination of elements is clearly not taught or suggested in Dodge. Claims 2-4 depend from independent claim 1 and is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 6 has been made independent, and recites at least one steel insert and that the axle tube comprises ductile iron. This material selection is a highly advantageous feature discussed throughout Applicant's application. Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Independent claim 8 recites different features from independent claim 1. In particular, claim 8 recites a differential carrier "formed as a unitary extension of the axle tube". This combination of elements is clearly not taught or suggested in Dodge. Like

Bear et al, Dodge shows a differential carrier which is not unitary with an axle tube. Claims 9 and 13 depend from independent claim 8 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 8. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 8-9 and 13 stand rejected over Sellors (GB 2,257,402A). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Independent claim 8 has further been amended to recite a yoke having a pair of openings positioned generally perpendicular to an axis of the axle assembly. This combination of features is clearly not taught or suggested in Sellors. Claims 9 and 13 are dependent from claim 8 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn as well.

3. Rejection under §103a. Claims 3-4 stand rejected over Dodge in view of Bear et al (U.S. Patent 5,664,847). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1 which was allowable over Dodge for the reasons discussed above. Nothing in Bear et al cures these deficiencies. Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 5 and 7 stand rejected over Dodge (US Patent 1,209,134) in view of Barnholt (U.S. 5,655,418). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claims 5 and 7 depend from claim 1 and are allowable over Dodge for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1. Nothing in Barnholt teaches or suggests at least one

steel insert on an axle tube having a unitary mounting module which is adapted to be welded to a differential carrier. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 10-11 stand rejected over Dodge (US Patent 1,209,134) in view of Bear et al (US Patent 5,664,847). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claims 10-11 depend from claim 8 which is allowable over Dodge for the reasons discussed above. Nothing in Bear et al cures these deficiencies. Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn and the claims be allowed.

CONCLUSION

The additional citations made of record and not relied upon by the Examiner have been considered by the Applicant. None is seen, either alone or in combination, to teach or suggest the present invention. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of the claims and allowance of the application.

Respectfully Submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this paper is being sent via facsimile to 703-872-9306 on February 3, 2005 to the Assistant Commissioner of Patents, Washington, DC 20231.

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